



National
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AFRICA REVIEW

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Somalia: Tribalism and Its Threat to Siad

Somali President Siad, who celebrates the ninth anniversary Saturday of the coup that brought him to power, is faced with serious threats to his authority. Not only has he failed to attract Western military and political support, he is also confronted by the danger that Ethiopia, frustrated by continuing Somali-supported guerrilla activity in the Ogaden, may launch a major punitive cross-border attack against Somalia's still disorganized Army. The most immediate threat to Siad and his regime, however, is that posed by tribal opponents within and outside Somalia who have attempted to exploit the Somali leader's weakened position in the aftermath of the Ogaden war.

Tribal Opposition

Political continuity and stability in Somalia have always hinged precariously on the ability of the country's political leaders to balance the competing demands of the many mutually antagonistic tribes that make up the Somali body politic. Civilian governments generally managed this balance successfully, but the system at times has broken down under military rule as a result of the repressive measures Siad has employed to counter tribal dissatisfaction and his abolition of the myriad of parties that previously ensured tribal elements a voice in the political process.

The most important opposition to Siad comes from the Majertain clan, one of Somalia's largest tribal groups and the one that was preeminent before Siad's accession to power. The Majertain have long resented Siad's blatant favoritism--political, military, and economic--toward his fellow Marehan clansmen. This has resulted in Marehan domination of virtually all aspects of Somali national life.

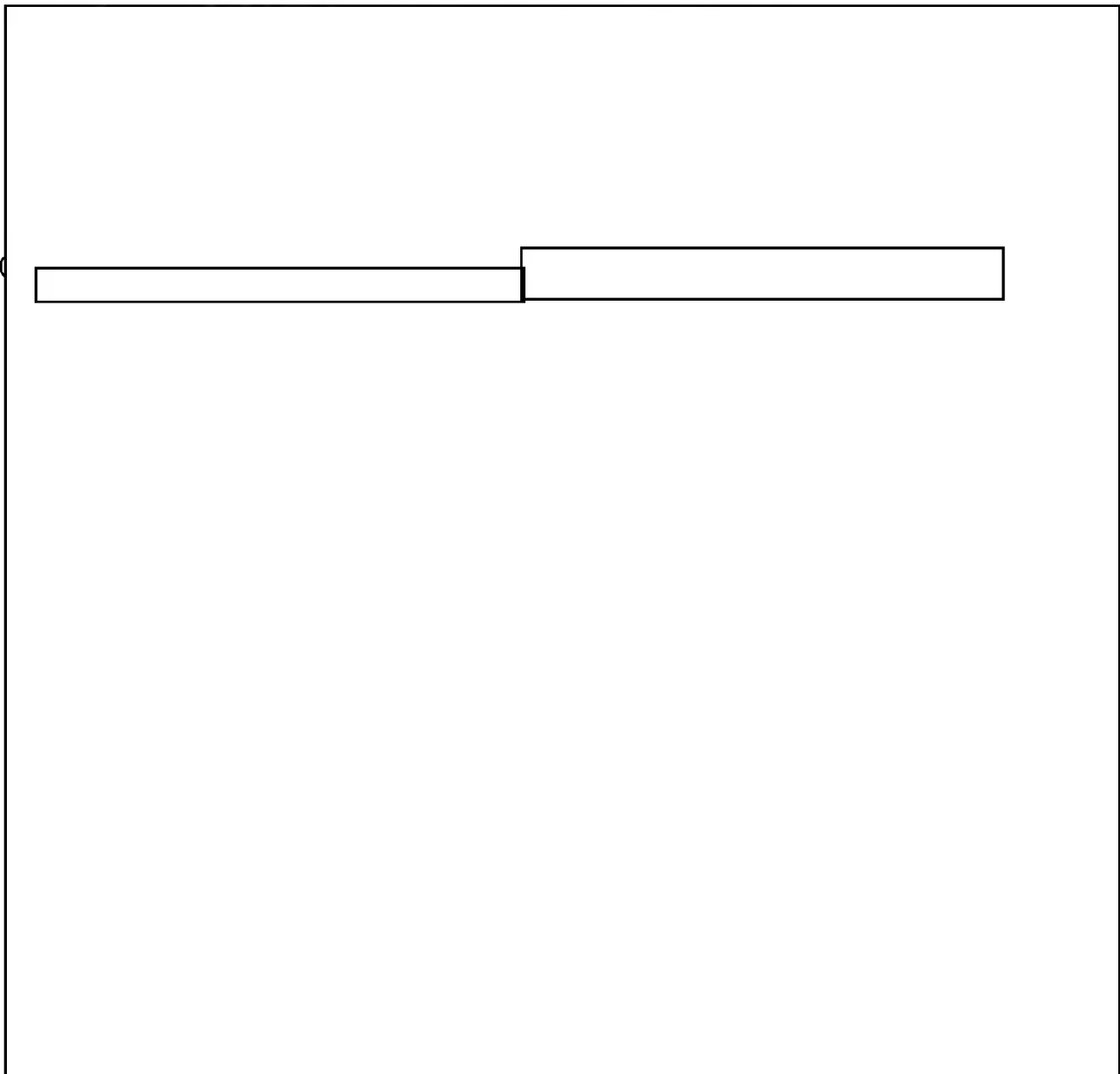
Majertain opposition came to a head last April when Majertain Army officers--attempting to capitalize on

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popular discontent with Siad's withdrawal of Somali
regulars from the Ogaden--spearheaded an abortive coup
in Mogadiscio. Several hundred alleged participants
and sympathizers were subsequently arrested; 17 have thus
far been sentenced to death--although none has yet been
executed--in a series of public show trials that have
significantly exacerbated tribal tensions.

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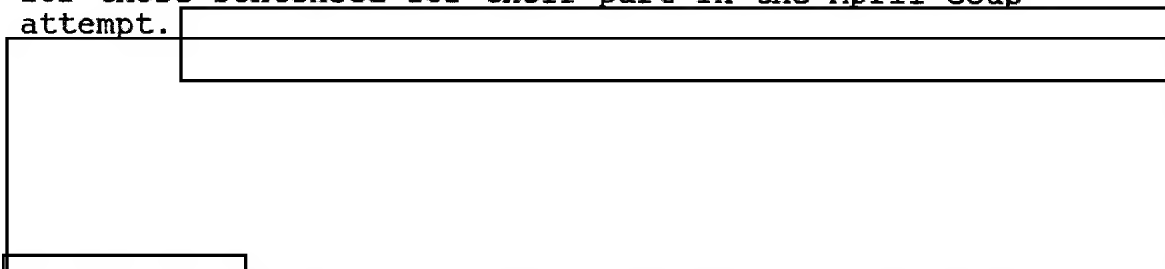
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Siad will continue to have considerable difficulty defusing tribal tensions that were sharply exacerbated by Somalia's military debacle in the Ogaden war and that threaten seriously to undermine his regime's stability. A number of other tribes, for example, despise Siad and his fellow Marehans as much as they do the Majertain, and their price for cooperating with Mogadiscio--greater tribal autonomy--is almost certainly more than Siad would be willing to pay. Such a move would further undercut the authority of the central government and undermine its emphasis on the unity of ethnic Somalia. Siad is a shrewd operator, however, and evidently believes that he can buy their loyalty with political appointments, military promotions, fancy hardware, and appeals to Somali nationalism.

As for his primary opponents, the Majertain, Siad could take a major step toward reconciliation by granting pardons--or at least commuting the death penalty--for those sentenced for their part in the April coup attempt.



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Siad will probably announce his decision during the revolution day ceremonies.

If he comes down hard on the coup plotters, the Majertain will almost certainly react by executing the pro-Siad tribesmen taken hostage since the start of the trials in Mogadiscio some two months ago and by otherwise stirring up trouble in areas of the Somali countryside they dominate. Such a decision by Siad will also give impetus to the efforts of Ethiopian-based Somali

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dissidents to unseat the Somali leader

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No matter what course Siad follows, and he is likely to proceed cautiously, he will continue to face tribally based problems. Characteristically, he will probably try to insulate himself further from criticism over the regime's failure in the Ogaden and Somalia's thus far unrewarding policy shift toward the West. To this end, Siad has already threatened to dissolve the Somali Socialist Revolutionary Party and reconstitute the Supreme Revolutionary Council--a collegial body that nominally ruled Somalia until the formation of the party in July 1976. Siad probably reasons that such a move would force Somali policymakers to share full responsibility with him for the controversial decisions with which they have been directly associated in the past. There are, in fact, strong indications that Siad will announce major government and party changes--possibly including the naming of a prime minister--during the anniversary festivities.

These moves could give Siad a small boost, but they will not remove the factors that have aggravated tribal animosities in Somalia. Indeed, it is doubtful that Siad will be willing or able to modify his approach to tribal issues sufficiently to do more than superficially patch over what promises to be a long-term problem for his regime.

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Nigeria: Possibility of Major Party Realignment

Although the formation of three major political parties was announced soon after the legalization late last month of political activity, the party scene clearly is far from having crystallized. It is also still too early to spot a presidential contender who can be predicted a winner in elections next year that will precede the turnover to civilian rule in October 1979. Political alliances in both the Muslim-oriented north and the predominantly Christian south remain in a state of flux. Because of intraparty strife, it is possible that at least two of the three emergent major parties could be completely recast into new political combinations in the next two months. The watershed development in this regard may be determined by who is named the presidential candidate next month of a fragile north-south amalgam calling itself the Nigerian People's Party. The choice could precipitate important defections from the group and realignments among major parties.

If the political struggle continues to evolve along current lines with three main parties splitting the national vote, it is probable that no presidential contender will meet constitutional requirements to win a popular election next year. A successful candidate must obtain a plurality nationwide and one-quarter of the votes in 13 of 19 states, a difficult task given the pervasiveness of Nigeria's ethnic and regional loyalties. Otherwise, the selection of a president from among the two top contenders is thrown to federal and state legislators who act as an electoral college and make their choice by simple majority vote. In this situation, the outcome would become extremely unpredictable and be characterized by considerable horse trading and shifting political alliances. A president chosen in such an indirect, runoff election would find it difficult to claim a national mandate. This could adversely affect his ability to govern the country, although a civilian president will have strong constitutional powers.

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Serious political campaigning probably will not get under way until after the major parties become stabilized and their presidential candidates emerge. Incidents of political thuggery--an endemic problem in Nigeria's first civilian government--can be expected to become more common as the pace of politicking intensifies. No party has yet been officially registered, a necessary step to gain a place on the ballot. To do so, each party must prove to a federal electoral commission that it has national status--support and organization in all 19 states. This requirement will bar the host of minor parties that have appeared.

Nigeria's competing ethnic and regional groups have so far not responded to two potentially controversial developments: the public unveiling last month of electoral district constituencies for legislative elections next year; or the preliminary national voters roll whose validity is subject to some doubt. The number of registered voters may have been inflated by as much as 20 percent, and the final list could swell to some 50 million claimed voters.

Major Party Developments

Barring kaleidoscopic changes ahead in party formation, the major electoral contest appears to be shaping up between groups belonging to the northern Muslim-oriented National Party of Nigeria and the People's Party of Nigeria, which is based primarily in the south. The third major party--led by veteran southern Yoruba tribal politician, 69-year-old Chief Obafemi Awolowo--would seem to have little chance of winning the presidency. Awolowo, who has boundless ambition, considerable organizing skills, and an ample supply of money, appears nonetheless reduced to playing the role of a spoiler.

Awolowo's Unity Party of Nigeria at this time is the best organized and most stable of the major parties, but it probably has the least support across tribal and regional lines--a necessary ingredient for victory. The Unity Party was the first to hold a nominating convention, which designated Awolowo as its presidential candidate to no one's surprise. Awolowo's choice as a vice presidential running mate of an obscure politician from the major Ibo tribe of southeastern Nigeria underscores his lack of significant appeal outside the Yoruba heartland.

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EMERGENT NIGERIAN POLITICAL PARTIES*

<u>Party Name</u>	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Orientation</u>
<u>MAJOR GROUPS</u>		
Unity Party of Nigeria	Obafemi Awolowo	Major Yoruba-based party with a slightly left-of-center populist stance.
Nigerian People's Party	Not yet chosen	Amalgam of southern tribal factions of the major Yoruba and Ibo groups plus various minority peoples and a northern Muslim faction.
National Party of Nigeria	Not yet chosen	Northern Muslim-oriented and dominated by major Hausa-Fulani tribe.
<u>MINOR GROUPS</u>		
National Union of Nigerian Citizens	Aminu Kano	Splinter group from National Party representing more progressive and radically-inclined northerners.
Nigerian National Congress Party	M. O. Idrisu	Socialist-oriented
Nigerian Workers and Peasants Vanguard Movement	Not yet chosen	Socialist-oriented
Socialist Party of Workers, Farmers, and Youth	Not yet chosen	Socialist-oriented
Republican Party of Nigeria	A. T. Rerri	Based in Bendel and Imo States
United Nigerian People's Party	Y. Numa	Based in Bendel State

*This is a listing of political parties that have appeared since political activity was legalized on 21 September, and others will follow. None has yet been officially registered to compete in elections tentatively scheduled to begin next April. To gain a place on the ballot, each party must prove that it has national appeal, which will preclude most from electoral participation.

Nigerian Democratic Congress	H. Dappa-Biriye	Based in Rivers State
People's Progressive Party	A. A. O. Ezenwa	Based in several southeastern states
Nigerian People's Welfare Party	G. B. A. Akinyede	Platform not yet announced
National Advance Party	T. Braithwaite	Billed as a "youths' party"
Movement of the People	Fela Anikulapo-Kuti (leading Afro-beat Musician)	A so-called "present generation" party
Nigerian Labor Party	M. A. Abdul	A workers' party; based in Benue State

Moreover, the narrow Yoruba cast of his party will make it vulnerable to charges of being a tribalist party bent on domination of other groups, particularly the north.

Awolowo apparently has written off the north, which has long been irredeemably hostile toward him. At the same time, he cannot realistically expect much Ibo support. Awolowo earned a reputation as a federal hardliner toward Ibo secessionists during Nigeria's civil war (1967-70) with his comments about using starvation as a legitimate weapon of war. Many Ibo also maintain that Awolowo misled the east into believing that he would pull the Yoruba west out of the Federation if the east seceded.

The People's Party is the most ethnically diverse and unstable of the major parties. It illustrates the difficulties of political cooperation in Nigeria's pluralistic society. Plagued with continuing divisions among the various groups that opportunistically fused to form the party, it may not hold together.

Heavily southern in makeup, the People's Party includes anti-Awolowo Yorubas, some Ibo tribal factions, and various southern minority tribesmen. Many of its members are drawn from the so-called "Club of 19," a grouping of young southerners and minority tribesmen of Nigeria's middle belt region who were responsible for

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the defeat in the constituent assembly last spring of a controversial northern proposal for a federal Islamic court of appeals.

The People's Party plans to hold a convention on 16 November to sort out its severe leadership problem. Southerners in the group apparently have not found a well-known southern politician with significant voter appeal. At the same time, many of them are opposed to giving the party's presidential nod to Waziri Ibrahim, who aspires to the presidency with or without the People's Party. He is a dissident northern politician and wealthy businessman of the Muslim Kanuri tribe and appears to be the party's best hope for projecting a much needed national image.

Should Ibrahim win the People's Party presidential nod and much of its southern membership decide to stay with the group, the overall political party situation may stabilize along current lines. If either event does not happen, major political shifts could occur. It is possible, for example, that Ibrahim could join forces with the northern Muslim political establishment to head the as yet leaderless National Party based in the north or form another northern party.

The northern Muslim-oriented National Party is clearly having organizational problems and may be more fragile than it earlier appeared. The party represents an apparently uneasy political marriage of the northern Muslim establishment and the region's younger and more anti-traditional elements between whom there reportedly have been bitter disputes. The group is built around remnants of the Hausa-Fulani-led party that dominated postindependence electoral politics. It is aimed at papering over northern political disunity and reasserting northern control of a future civilian government.

The Muslim north has the largest bloc of votes, with 38 percent of the electorate. If the north can agree on a leadership slate with southern appeal and not seriously split its own vote, its presidential nominee will probably be able to build up a sufficiently broad alliance with other groups to win. A great deal depends on whether or not the Muslim north can rebuild its former political alliance with a majority of the southern Ibo tribe.

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Serious infighting within the National Party, however, has hindered the selection of a leader. One party spokesman recently told the US Consul in Kaduna he believes that calling a party nominating convention any time soon would only further divide and weaken the party. He believes the party's eventual presidential candidate will be a northern Muslim with a southern running mate. There has been renewed speculation, however, that the presidential nod might be given to Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Ibo and Nigeria's well-known, 74-year-old ex-President under the postindependence parliamentary government.

It does not appear that the National Party will be seriously affected by Aminu Kano who recently defected to form a northern splinter party. Kano is a 58-year-old politician of radical-socialist bent who led a small northern "progressive" party in the early 1960s. Kano has been joined by a few of the National Party's younger and more radically inclined elements including some "progressive" Ibo politicians. Kano's departure may mean the National Party is becoming more conservative politically.

The North's "Libyan Connection"

One of the northern personalities portrayed by recent reports as pro-Libyan, Mohammed Abubaker Rimi, has teamed up with Aminu Kano's splinter group. Two other Nigerian figures alleged to be conduits in reported Libyan efforts to influence northern politics have remained in the National Party. It is unclear if Kano's Party will be more favored by the Libyans. Altogether, we believe that religious extremists and pro-Libyan politicians in the National Party compose a very small faction of younger and more militantly inclined individuals, and there is no indication that they hold real power.

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The Minor Parties

Most of the minor parties on the scene will probably broker their support to the major parties or wither away. These groups are based on various regions, special interests, or personalities. None can be expected to have broad impact in the larger Nigerian society. The emergence of at least three socialist-oriented parties suggests that there are deep divisions within the Nigerian left. They probably will expend much of their energy in sectarian feuding. If nothing else, the appearance of small parties in such large numbers is reminiscent of the divisiveness and chaos that marked Nigeria's first civilian party-based government. Nigeria's new constitution is intended to encourage greater national cooperation and unity with requirements such as the one that limits electoral competition to broad-based, multiethnic political coalitions.

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UGANDA-TANZANIA: Ugandan agitation over the alleged invasion by Tanzanian forces appears to be subsiding. President Amin made a visit to the "front" and subsequently declared Ugandan forces would not retaliate. Tanzania, which has consistently denied that any invasion occurred, reportedly instituted a precautionary military alert. It appears that whatever happened on the border centered on government efforts to subdue dissident Army troops.

Amin's elaborate fiction of an invasion may have been intended to preserve the new image Amin has been trying to create as a respecter of human rights--both of Ugandan nationals and of US citizens resident in his country. Amin's blast at the US last week in the wake of President Carter's signing of the trade embargo may have alleviated some of his anger--at least for the moment.

Amin has since remained quiet on the issue, suggesting that the approximately 170 US citizens in Uganda are not currently the object of his attention.

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